

## Board of County Commissioners

### Workshop

Date of Meeting: November 18, 2003  
 Date Submitted: November 13, 2003

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Parwez Alam, County Administrator  
 Tony Park, P.E., Director of Public Works

Subject: Tharpe Street Corridor Study Progress Report Workshop

#### **Statement of Issue:**

Request Board approval of the Tharpe Street Corridor Study Progress Report and Workbook including the transportation design alternatives selected by the Project Team for further study.

#### **Background:**

During the April 22, 2003 County Commission meeting, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the "Transportation Corridor Study P<sup>2</sup> Program Policy No. 03-07." Item 5.k.(1) requires the Public Works Department to conduct two workshops. This is the first Tharpe Street Corridor Study Workshop which is required to "present to the Board the corridor design alternatives recommended by staff and the Consultant based on the input of the CAC (Citizens' Advisory Committee) (Attachment #1). Staff shall request approval by the Board to proceed with the corridor study using the recommended corridor design alternatives."

Included in the workshop package are two items. The first, the workshop agenda, is an executive summary intended to give an overview of the process used to date in the development of the study plus the following information:

- Introduction to project
- Project Location Map
- Primary Public Comments
- Industrial Section Cross Section
- Residential Section Cross Section
- Sheridan Section Cross Section

The second item is the Progress Workbook containing all the information that Public Works' staff, the Citizens' Advisory Committee and the consultants, Kimley Horn and Associates, have reviewed and analyzed to date. At the end of the Corridor Study, mid to late summer 2004, the Progress Workbook will contain a synopsis of all the information used by the Tharpe Street Team in the selection of the transportation design alternatives to be presented to the Board for their review and approval.

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**Analysis:**

Because of increased traffic, the Tallahassee-Leon County Long-Range Transportation Plan identified Tharpe Street as needing enhanced roadway capacity. The need to also accommodate other modes of travel such as bicycles, pedestrians, and transit were also identified in the plan. The limits of this corridor study include Tharpe Street between Capital Circle NW and Ocala Road. The street is presently a two-lane, undivided minor arterial with open drainage swales and overhead power lines. In addition, there are no bicycle paths or sidewalks along Tharpe Street. An aerial of the project location is included as page one of Attachment #2.

The Project Team includes County staff, the appointed Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), and Kimley-Horn and Associates. This corridor study has followed the P<sup>2</sup> Public Participation Program of Leon County and has included extensive stakeholder involvement to date on this project. In addition to the involvement of the CAC, stakeholder interviews have been performed and members of the public have provided input. A key step in the process was the primary public involvement workshop, the Town Summit, held on April 1, 2003. In addition, meetings with the residents of Sheridan Road were also held to help refine the recommendations for that area. The information gained from the Town Summit, interest group meetings and individual stakeholder interviews coupled with continuous guidance by the Project Team resulted in conceptual design considerations for the project. The primary public comments received to date are included in this packet.

Initial steps in the project process included identification of issues, opportunities, and constraints, as well as a needs analysis for the project. Early in the project process, it was determined that the following elements may significantly affect alternative development, meaning these issues must be carefully considered as we developed alternatives: traffic conditions, right-of-way, stormwater and noise. Throughout the alternative selection process, value engineering has been applied and alternatives were developed sensitive to these elements and the costs associated with them. The project team determined that certain issues, though important and requiring study during the evaluation phase of the project, will not significantly impact alternative development. Specifically, regardless of the alternative, the following issues will be addressed in essentially the same way: potential contamination, drainage, flood plains, historical resources, wetlands, state and federally listed wildlife species, archaeological sites, and air quality. Various alternatives including two-lane, three-lane, four-lane and five-lane concepts were considered. Some of these alternatives were eliminated because they did not meet the objectives of the study. The CAC decided to focus the alternatives evaluation on four-lane divided sections. These alternatives included a series of roadway cross-section designs for various segments of Tharpe Street. Cross sections were developed for these three distinct segments along the corridor; the predominately industrial areas between Capital Circle NW and Mission Road, the residential/mixed-use areas between Mission Road and Ocala Road and a small segment midway within the residential area directly around Sheridan Road. These sections are shown on the project location aerial on page one of Attachment #2 and are indicated in green, yellow and orange respectively. After evaluating the various cross sections, the Project Team selected cross sections for each area for further detailed evaluation. A location map, list of public comments, cross sections of the recommended design alternatives and project schedule are included in Attachment #2. The placement of utilities will be evaluated as part of the detailed evaluation of the alternatives. Members of the CAC and residential community have requested underground utilities for the residential section. This option will be evaluated however, staff explained that underground utilities are typically cost prohibitive and not to be seriously disappointed should this option not be financially practical.

*Industrial Alternatives*

The preferred cross section for the industrial section is included on page 3 of Attachment #2. It includes a four-lane roadway with 12-foot lanes and an 18-foot raised median, with five-foot wide sidewalks and a four-foot bicycle lane in both directions. A four-foot wide grassed area separates the sidewalk from the travel lanes. These improvements can be accommodated within the existing 100-foot right-of-way. Street trees are planned for planting outside but along the right-of-way. Potentially, a landscape easement could be obtained from adjacent private properties to accommodate the street tree installation. The CAC and Public Works' staff also directed the Project Team to evaluate alternative access concepts.

*Residential Alternatives*

Existing right-of-way widths in these areas vary with some areas as narrow as 66 feet. Every alternative requires right-of-way acquisition in order to accommodate improvements. The preferred cross section requires a 96-foot right-of-way that will include a 16-foot wide raised median, four 11-foot vehicle travel lanes, four-foot bicycle lanes, and six-foot wide sidewalks along each side of the roadway. A four-foot wide grassed area separates the sidewalk from the travel lanes. Because right-of-way acquisition is required, two alignment alternatives (widening around existing centerline or widening to the north) are being evaluated for impacts.

*Sheridan Road Alternatives*

Numerous preliminary alternatives were considered along Sheridan Road due to the existing conditions and future requirements of the Tharpe Street Corridor. In this vicinity, Sheridan Road parallels Tharpe Street and functions as a frontage road for several residential properties. Alternative considerations included maintenance of a two-way Sheridan Road (requiring roadway installation closer to existing residential units), Sheridan Road as a one-way street preserving "off-corridor" access, and removal of Sheridan with access accommodations directly onto Tharpe Street. The preferred cross section includes four 11-foot travel lanes and a 10.5-foot median with four-foot bike lanes and six-foot sidewalks on Tharpe Street. Sheridan Road will have a 14-foot travel lane and a six-foot landscape buffer will be between Sheridan Road and the Tharpe Street sidewalk. Additionally, landscaping and the architectural treatment of potential noise walls to the south are being investigated as part of the alternative evaluation.

Once the detailed evaluation of these selected alternatives is performed, the Project Team will recommend the preferred alternative for each section for which 30% design plans will be developed. A public hearing will then be held showcasing the recommended alternative to solicit further public input. The final recommendations as well as a completed Tharpe Street Corridor Study Progress Workbook will then be presented to the Board of County Commissioners. A detailed project schedule is included as page six of Attachment #2.

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**Options:**

1. Approve the Tharpe Street Corridor Study Progress Report and Workbook including the transportation design alternatives selected for further study.
2. Do not approve the Tharpe Street Corridor Study Progress Report and Workbook including the transportation design alternatives selected for further study.
3. Board direction.

**Recommendations**

Option 1.

**Attachments:**

- #1 Transportation Corridor Study P<sup>2</sup> Program Policy
- #2 Location Map, List of Public Comments, Recommended Design Alternatives and Project Schedule
- #3 Tharpe Street Corridor Study Progress Workbook, November 18, 2003

PA/TP/SAD/djw